

A Cherokee Legend of Two Wolves

[Cranston Holden - Today's Manager.](#)

Aims & Objectives:

- Learn how to participate in critique
- Understand the purpose of critique
- Relax while drawing
- Receive feedback about drawing technique



Reading:

An old Cherokee is teaching his grandson about life. "A fight is going on inside me," he said to the boy.

It is a terrible fight and it is between two wolves. One is evil – he is anger, envy, sorrow, regret, greed, arrogance, self-pity, guilt, resentment, inferiority, lies, false pride, superiority, and ego." He continued, "The other is good – he is joy, peace, love, hope, serenity, humility, kindness, benevolence, empathy, generosity, truth, compassion, and faith. The same fight is going on inside you – and inside every other person, too.

The grandson thought about it for a minute and then asked his grandfather, "Which wolf will win?"

The old Cherokee simply replied, "The one you feed."

Holden adds to this story by saying. Today, more than ever, you have a multitude of negativity competing for your attention; television showing commercials of how you can't be happy without their newest products, news media telling about the doom and gloom of the world, the internet and the drama of what is social media, talk radio, and personal acquaintances. Everything you take in effects the way you perceive the world. You become the average of the input you take in and the people you spend your time with.

The Information You Take In is In Your Control

Holden goes on to stress the advantage the news brings to a cooperative community of learners. As a student you can control the amount (if any) of negative television you take in. This will control the destructive news you absorb. You can control the radio station you listen to. You can even determine the way you spend your time with and with whom.

Conducting a Classroom Critique

In this exercise we will listen to the way we receive criticism that has been intended as constructive. Over the years the word criticism has become laced with negative overtones but this is not the way the idea of [talking about art and writing](#) should be viewed. Both the giver and receiver of this criticism can learn from the exercise.

Setting the Scene a Cartooning Activity

Step One

Set up a cartooning activity. Students are to imagine that they have war going on inside as described in the Cherokee story supplied by Holden. Students are to cartoon the two wolves battling and when drawing each one imagine they are that wolf. It will be interesting to see how they draw the attributes of each protagonist.

It may be helpful to tell them to actually imagine a time when they felt someone unfairly criticized them, and another time when they felt criticism from others was helpful. Have the wolves battle it out on paper.

Be sure that the students are settled when they do this activity some may feel a little uncomfortable by the introspective nature of the work. Warn them that it might make them feel a little uncomfortable and this will help them to realise that everyone goes through similar emotions when they are criticised.

NB * This [WikiHow](#) resource will help you get them started. If you need more a simple Google search will flesh out ways to show students how to draw wolves.

Step Two

Conduct a classroom critique of the drawings.

There are two aspects of this critique

- a. students will see each others drawings and learn from feedback about each one
- b. students will be asked to focus on how they are feeling both when being critiqued and when looking at the work of others

Critique Process

When using this body of work with Middle Years Schooling in a project based inquiry context it is better to conduct classroom critique according to one method so that students always know what to expect and so that they can feel comfortable. This process has always worked for me – but I welcome feedback about Critique Methodology.

Part One

1. Students are to sit in a circle on the floor with their artwork in front of them.
2. Decide a place to start in the circle. Often the question “Who would like to go first?” is enough.
3. Once started the students is only allowed to say two sentences.
 - a. S1.What I like about my drawing is (e.g. the lines are strong the colours convey meaning) and I think this (aspect e.g. composition) could be improved. (by ...e.g. [using the golden mean](#))
 - b. S2. I like (Names) drawing because (e.g. the lines are strong the colours convey meaning) and I think he/she might be able to improve his or her drawing by.
4. This process takes a while (5-10mins) each student must speak in turn and the class remains silent while they speak.

Part Two

1. Students take their journal and write down tips, tricks and insights they have learned from the critique.
2. They might set it out like this

- a. Where my drawing is now. (e.g. I like the strength of line but composition has let me down)
- b. Where I would like it to be. (e.g. An expressive line drawing that conveys meaning through lines, colour and composition. Each part works together.)
- c. What I will need to do to get it there. (e.g. [use the golden mean](#) and take more care with placement.)

Part Three. (Specific to the [A Cherokee Legend of Two Wolves](#))

1. Students now [journal](#) about how they felt when others were offering criticism of their work. Indeed some even feel bad when they have to talk about their own work in front of others.
2. Students are encouraged to list
 - a. what was helpful
 - b. how they felt when criticized
 - c. were their times when the criticism felt unhelpful

Ask them whether they found that their feelings about critique have changed now that they have thought about criticism in this way? Learning how to function well during critique can take a while but it is well worth the effort. Usually teachers would not have time to conduct part three but they can say to the students if you are feeling negative about critique use your journals and log your feelings. This will be very helpful.

To paraphrase Holden: there is an easy way to work with the information and feedback that comes from critique situations. Filter what is said according to how it makes you feel. I might not like being told that someone thinks my composition is a little off. However, if they also draw my attention to a way to improve this aspect of my drawing I will be energised by the thought of improving my work. Even if taken a little a back at first, I will soon be back at work fixing the problem.

Holden says:

select who or what gets your attention. After spending time with that person or doing that activity ask yourself, "Do I feel drained or do I feel energized?" If it drains you.....DON'T WASTE YOUR TIME WITH IT. If you feel energized, it's probably adding value to your life and making you better.

One of his mentors, Darren Hardy, puts it like this.

Your mind is an empty glass. When you fill it with dirty water that is the lens you see the world through. The only thing you can see is negativity, doom and gloom. When you begin to pour clean water into it, the dirty water begins to overflow and leave the glass. Soon, if enough clean clear water is poured into the glass container, it will flush out all the murky water and you will be left with a glass of clean beautiful water, and that how you will see the world.

To finalise the critique session read the above quote.

Ask the students

“Are you taking in more clean water than dirty?”

“Which wolf are you feeding?”

Resources:

- Holden,C. (2013) [A Cherokee Legend of Two Wolves](#)
- How to Draw a Wolfe. (2013) [WikiHow](#)
- [14 Reasons We Keep Visual Journals](#). (2013)
- Improve Composition: [Use the golden mean](#). (2013)
- [Chris Hilbig's – Yes You Too Can Learn to Draw](#). (2013)